10 August 2021

**DECISION**

**HARNESS RACING VICTORIA**

**and**

**ANDREW VOZLIC**

**Date of hearing:** 9 April 2021

**Panel:** Judge John Bowman (Chairperson).

**Appearances:** Mr Shane Larkins appeared on behalf of the Stewards.

Mr Andrew Vozlic represented himself.

**Charge:** Australian Harness Racing Rule 149(1) states “A driver shall take all reasonable and permissible measures during the course of a race to ensure the horse driven by that driver is given full opportunity to win or obtain the best possible placing in the field”.

**Particulars of charge:** The particulars being that Mr Vozlic engaged in a sustained challenge for the lead during an extremely fast lead time and a significantly faster than average first quarter which Stewards believed under the circumstances was not reasonable and permissible and tactics which  were  detrimental to his drives’ finishing position.

**Plea:** Guilty

**DECISION**

The parties in this appeal have come to an agreement as to the outcome that they seek. The ultimate decision is one for the Tribunal, but I take into account the wishes of the parties and that Mr Larkins is a very experienced Steward. He and Mr Vozlic have arrived at an outcome which seems to be satisfactory and seems to be fair and appropriate.

The case involves a breach of Rule 149(1) in relation to Mr Vozlic’s drive in race 1 at Mildura on 24 October 2020. He engaged in a sustained contest to hold the lead in an extremely fast time. Pennies Following ultimately compounded and finished a distant ninth.

Initially, Mr Vozlic pleaded not guilty and the Stewards imposed a penalty of 6 weeks suspension. He is now pleading guilty and the agreed penalty sought is 4 weeks suspension. This seems to me to be a proper and sensible outcome. I have every confidence that Mr Larkins has taken all relevant matters into account. Further, Mr Vozlic has also taken a very sensible approach. This type of sensible resolution in appropriate cases is to be commended.

In short, the appeal is upheld. Mr Vozlic’s licence to drive in races is suspended for a period of 4 weeks and that period of suspension is to commence at midnight on 10 April 2021.

Mark Howard
Registrar, Victorian Racing Tribunal